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arrangement of material is topical rather than chronological and the same thinker often appears in several connections. Three main conceptions have controlled scientific thought—the ideas of constancy, unity, and causality—and these three converge in the principle of the conservation of energy. Even by the Greek philosophers the constancy of matter was regarded as an axiom and energy was looked upon as a property of matter. When this principle was scientifically formulated by Lavoisier as the chemical law of the permanence of mass, the conservation of energy became a distinct problem. The earliest form of the latter principle was the conception of the constancy of mechanical action, growing especially out of Galileo's law of inertia and generalized in Descartes' theory of the indestructibility of motion. The extension and correction of this view led Leibniz to the conception of latent energy. These principles very early demonstrated to scientists that mechanical energy cannot be created and this introduced the assumption that there is a quantitative equivalence between cause and effect. Such an equivalence serves the scientific need for unity; since natural forces can thus be regarded as not merely analogous or related, but as substantially identical, being merely different forms of one energy. In this way the principle of conservation, which had originally been applied only to the motions of gross bodies, was extended to include molecular motions and ether vibrations, and ultimately all the phenomena of heat, light, electricity, chemical affinity, etc. But if these forces are ultimately identical, it follows that any one should be transformable into any other. First heat, then light, and later electricity, were shown to be equivalent to definite quantities of mechanical action, and ultimately Mayer formulated the general law that "In all physical and chemical processes the given energy remains a constant quantity" (p. 62). Dr. Haas adds two sections which deal respectively with mathematical formulations of the principle of conservation and with experimental investigations to determine the exact mechanical equivalent of heat. Dr. Haas refuses to admit that any single person can be regarded as the discoverer of the principle. Credit is due to many thinkers, to philosophers, especially Leibniz, who established the fundamental concepts of the principle, and to scientists, perhaps especially to Mohr and Faraday, who first insisted upon its applicability to all departments of physics, and to Mayer, Joule, and Helmholtz, who reduced the law to exactness. Dr. Haas reprints in an appendix an address upon the subject delivered by him in Cologne in 1908, and the work closes with a bibliography and an index of names.

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The Dialectic of Plotinus. By HARRY ALLEN OVERSTREET. (University of California Publication in Philosophy.) Berkeley, The University Press, 1909.—pp. 29.

This monograph of Mr. Overstreet's is an attempt to interpret Plotinus by the aid of Hegel. Acceptance of his discussion will be determined largely by whether or no one is Hegelian. Not being Hegelian I disagree with him, and my criticism for that reason should perhaps be taken with a pinch of idealistic salt.

It seems, however, fair on general principles to deplore the direction of Mr. Overstreet's approach to his subject. It would be malicious, perhaps, to add that his method is doubly fallacious in that, like the straight line in some non-Euclidean geometries, it terminates in its starting point. But malice apart, it would seem that any philosophy can be more fruitfully studied, and its meaning more correctly elucidated, in the light of antecedent and contemporaneous philosophic and religious movements, than regarded as the harbinger of future systems. Such a method, moreover, frequently renders recourse to the future for light superfluous. Mr. Overstreet is in this respect all the more disappointing in view of the need in this country of more study of the ancients for their own sakes, and from their own point of view. Yet it would be ungenerous not to acknowledge one's gratitude for the romance of the title of his study, though it be over in a dozen lines (the name of Hegel occurs in the thirteenth), with its momentary liberation from an age and place prone to think of philosophy as invented by Kant and made in Germany.

Mr. Overstreet sees in the Plotinian "One" a foreshadowing of the "Idea" or "Spirit" of Hegel. But this farsightedness blurs, I think, his view of Plotinus's teaching as regards both the One and νοῦς. Νοῦς Mr. Overstreet would apparently restrict to subjective activity of thinking in contradistinction to an objective νοητὸν, and have Plotinus find the synthesis of the two in the One. But surely Plotinus, like Aristotle in his discussion of the nature of the divine mind, uses the term also, and, I venture to think, primarily, to signify the union of the intellect and the intelligible in thought or reason which is its own object. Νοῦς means to Plotinus not a lower category, but the highest of which Thought is capable; and in criticizing the Aristotelian νόησις νοήσεως as latently dualistic, and rejecting νοῦς as a first principle because of the incompleteness of the identification of subject and object therein affected, he is merely denying, like all mystics, the ability of anything which can be denominated thought or reason to accomplish the union and reach ultimate reality. Even the Hegelian category of Spirit, one feels, would have evoked from him merely another ἐπέκεινα. For, far from regarding the One as a "sublation" of νοῦς and νοητόν "in a unity which while it embraces is 'above' them," Plotinus, as it seems to me, regards it as an obliteration of them in an ineffable unity attainable only by passing beyond dialectic to ecstasy wherein seer and seen, subject and object, along with all distinctions, are not synthesized but annihilated.

In short, the One which Mr. Overstreet regards as the center of the Plotinian dialectic has in my opinion little to do with it, beyond the fact that dialectic sets us on the road towards the One, as Plotinus himself says. But dialectic, which initiates the search for unity does not reach it. It ceases when it has accomplished the category of νοῦς, and confides, at the highest reach of which articulate thought is capable, the questing spirit to a super-rational faculty of mystic vision.

Why Mr. Overstreet will not accept Plotinus's mysticism at its face value, I cannot understand. He would not, I fancy, find in Nirvana, or Brahma, or the Silence of Meister Eckhart, attempts to formulate the Hegelian Category of Spirit. But these are the concepts most germane to the One, and it is in the motives which inspired them that we most nearly approach the sources of Plotinus's inspiration. The mystic One may be an irrational and impossible concept, but that does not mean that it is purely negative and barren, or that Plotinus did not entertain it. It may not work well as it stands with the rest of Plotinus's system, but that does not mean that it is something else in disguise. It is a mistake to try to rationalize Plotinus (if interpretation in the light of the Hegelian "Idea" can be called rationalizing), at a point where Plotinus is so frankly super-rational. It increases not our understanding, but our misunderstanding of a system which is already complex and obscure enough. One cannot but regret that Mr. Overstreet did not devote himself to unravelling and tracing to their respective sources in the philosophic and religious influences of the day the varied and conflicting thought which are tangled in the Enneads, rather than to coloring with a German dye what is but one of the many threads in the web and woof of the Plotinian system.

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Über den Willensakt und das Temperament. By NARZISS ACH. Leipzig, Quelle & Meyer, 1910.—pp. xi, 324.

This book is the author's second experimental study of will. The first was entitled *Über die Willenstätigkeit und das Denken,* and appeared in 1905. It has enlarged our knowledge of the neural tendencies influencing the course of ideational processes by adding to the reproductive and perseverative tendencies the determining tendency. The function of the determining tendency is, according to Ach, to control and regulate the purposive course of mental events, especially of thought and action, and thus to emancipate us to some extent from the purely associative trend of ideas. The determining tendencies are defined as "unconscious dispositions issuing from an idea of end, directed toward certain future impressions, and eliciting the spontaneous occurrence of determinate ideas."

The problem of Ach's new book is the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the dynamic aspect of voluntary actions. The procedure is a combination of two methods employed in the study of memory, *viz.*, Ebbinghaus's method of learning and relearning, and G. E. Müller's method of right associates. Thus, by frequent repetition distributed over several days, an observer forms strong habitual associations between members of series of nonsense-syllables. Afterwards he must break them up by voluntary interference, that is, by responding to any presented syllable not with its immediate successor in the series, but with a new nonsense-syllable formed according to a prescribed determination to make a rhyme or to transpose the letters of the presented syllable. After each experiment careful systematic introspections were required.